

Applicants: Rodrigues et al.
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REMARKS

The application has been amended. Claim 17 has been amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has withdrawn the finality of the previous rejection, a determination which is gratefully acknowledged. The Examiner, however, has again rejected claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,024,606 to Ming-Hwa. In view of the position set forth hereinbelow, this determination is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner now contends that the Ming-Hwa reference clearly discloses that the sleeve 13 has at least one protrusion 16 encircling less than a full circumference of the locking sleeve. The Examiner further contends that the grooves 14', as shown in Figure 1, preclude the protrusion from being in a full circle. The Examiner concludes that the grooves 14' represent parts that would actually split the circumference.

It appears to applicant that the only groove disclosed in Ming-Hwa is groove 15 which is clearly set forth as being annular. Element 16 is actually axially forward of groove 15. Therefore, the protrusions 16 would not interrupt or interfere with the circumference.

The Examiner relies on element 14' in forming a principle part of the rejection. However, neither a reference numeral 14', nor the term "grooves" associated with a reference

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numeral 14', are found in the specification of Ming-Hwa. Applicant is at a loss to understand what elements 14' shown in Figure 1 could be.

However, what is not clearly shown is that elements 14' form discontinuations of either the annular groove 15 or the projecting shoulder 16. Any attempt by the Examiner to interpret it as such is mere speculation unsupported by the clear disclosure of the reference. Inasmuch as the present rejection is based on 35 U.S.C. §102 anticipation, it is incumbent upon the Examiner to find clear disclosure within the specification to support the Examiner's interpretation of the reference. No such interpretation is forthcoming from the Ming-Hwa specification. Therefore, as a matter of law, Ming-Hwa cannot anticipate independent claims 1 and 11 of the present application.

Turning now to independent claim 17, the Examiner has offered a reasonable explanation as to why the Ming-Hwa reference may meet applicant's claims in the broadest interpretation. As previously argued, the present invention provides a locking sleeve which is inserted into the connector body through the cable receiving end of the connector body. The Examiner may, in fact, be correct in his assertion that claim 17 does not clearly recite the feature which applicant has argued as supporting patentability of the claim.

Therefore, claim 17 has been amended to clearly set forth that the locking sleeve is insertable through the cable receiving end of the connector body. As previously argued, Ming-

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Hwa does not show this arrangement between the connector body and the locking sleeve as the locking sleeve of Ming-Hwa is inserted through the opposite end of the connector body. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 defines patentably over Ming-Hwa.

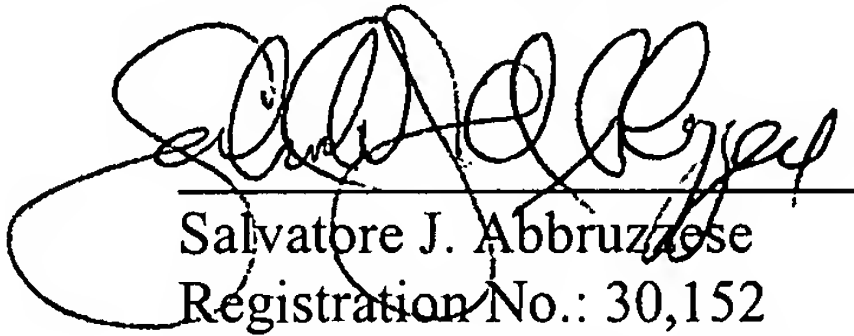
Having responded in full to the present Office Action, it is submitted that independent claims 1, 11 and 17, as well as the claims which depend therefrom, define patentably over the cited reference. The application, therefore, is deemed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees associated with this communication, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 20-0776. Such authorization includes authorization to charge fees for extensions of time, if any, under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 and also should be treated as a constructive petition for an extension of time in this reply or any future reply pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136.

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Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response, the undersigned would be pleased to address them by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore J. Abbruzzese", is written over a horizontal line.

Salvatore J. Abbruzzese
Registration No.: 30,152
Attorney for Applicant(s)

HOFFMANN & BARON, LLP
6900 Jericho Turnpike
Syosset, New York 11791
(973) 331-1700